

THE CONTRACT ENFORCED WITH AN ARMY

IN THE TWO weeks since 1,000 troops moved in to break the 11 week old Glasgow dustcart drivers' strike, two things have become absolutely clear: first, that the troops are not there to clean up a "dangerous health hazard" but to scab and blackleg for the Social Contract; and second, that the local trade union leaders have done more toward helping the troops than to building solidarity for the dustcart drivers and the Corporation electricians who have now joined the drivers.

With over 70,000 tons of rubbish piled up, and over 1,000 tons coming in each day, the troops, as one of their officers admitted, could only get rid of the backlog by August, if they worked 13 hours a day.

Obviously the troops cannot, and are not attempting to, clear the rubbish.

Labour Party councillors (one of whose number was arrested on charges of corruption a day before the troops came in) are not in the least concerned about any health hazards in Glasgow. If they were, the slum buildings that constitute a chronic and permanent health hazard for the people who have to live in them would have been cleared years ago. As one striker put it, they don't send troops round with blankets for old age pensioners when they are dying of cold in the winter.

If that was their concern, why haven't they followed Liverpool Council's example and paid up. The troops were accepted an interim pay deal of £2.65.

But for the Labour Council in Glasgow, and the Labour Government in Whitehall, there are higher things at stake than the health and living conditions of Glasgow workers and their families. There is the Social Contract to defend: a 'contract' which was always one-sided, and now uses troops to enforce it.

The troops on the streets of Glasgow are there to bully and intimidate. They bring with them all the lessons of a 5 year war of repression in the north of Ireland.

Why have they picked on Glasgow? Scottish workers, and those of Glasgow in particular, have led the fight against the wage cutting policies of Tory and Labour governments. And they have been successful. Now the Social Contracters are hoping to teach them a lesson, and, with them, other workers.

Local trade union officials, who have very close links with the Glasgow Labour Party and its councillors, have been militant in doing nothing, and even the fact that troops have been brought in to scab seems to have caused them little embarrassment. They have blocked calls for official backing in response to the troops, and tried to prevent the mobilisation of other workers.

James Jack of the Scottish TUC thought the enemy was not the troops, but "subversive elements to the left of the Communist Party who are not interested in the dustmen's dispute but

Contd. on back page

Workers' fight

5p

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CHRISTMAS is the traditional pantomime season. But this year pantomime time has reached its height at Easter, with the decisions of the Labour Party NEC on whether or not to campaign against the Common Market.

The all purpose panto, side show, con trick and image builder for washed out Labour politicians — the so called grand campaign against the Common Market — has so far resulted in victory within the NEC of the Labour Party for the anti Marketeers, followed by prompt agreement not to actively pit the Party machine against the government which has recommended acceptance of the terms it has renegotiated.

With warriors like that to oppose them, the pro Europeans have little to fear. It was always a certainty that Wilson would 'come off the fence' and recommend acceptance. The whole elaborate manoeuvring has been a charade.

Last refuge

Workers have been drawn into that charade by burnt out leftists like Foot, and half-out trade union leaders like ~~Foot~~. The ruling class has benefited as a pickpocket benefits by distracting your attention: and the pockets of the working class have been well and truly picked while distracted by a meaningless debate, in which there was only one reality facing the working class — the reality that in or out, the same struggle would have to go on against the same forces, albeit in marginally varying conditions.

It was truly said that patriotism was the last refuge of scoundrels. Little Englandism and antiEEC campaigning is and has been a refuge for left politicians like Foot who stand for the Social Contract and for trade union leaders who accept wage restraint. Instead of building links with the workers of Europe, instead of standing against the widespread chauvinism linked closely and organically with racialism they become its mouthpiece.

And not only the Labour Party reformists and trade union leaders. The most rabid of all has been the Communist Party. For them, the foreign policy needs of the Russian bureaucracy who oppose the EEC plus sheer opportunism, greatly outweigh any mild and perfunctory distaste they may express for chauvinism.

The "revolutionary" left, at first all scorning the reformists who prattle about the great prospects for a speedy British road to socialism if only Britain keeps out of the EEC, has now unanimously abandoned the principled position. The more sophisticated like IS do it mildly and shamefacedly

THE GREAT YES/NO DEBATE — WHAT A CHARADE!

by JOHN O'MAHONY

because they fear to confront both the little England chauvinism to be found in the working class and its reformist spokesmen.

The IMG, with its characteristic imbalance and lack of sense, has embraced the anti EEC cause with overflowing enthusiasm. They refuse to understand that the job of a small propaganda group amidst this nationalistic din in which Clive Jenkins and the CP are the left in an obscene chain which has the National Front at the other end, is precisely to make propaganda. It adds its tin whistle to the cacophony of chauvinism, deluding itself with grand calculations about the world balance of forces.

The argument that the referendum and a "no" vote weaken the ruling class has validity, but misses the point. The referendum is a one off event: the choice is one or the other capitalist solution. The cost of participation in the yesno debate is that revolutionary socialists assist, or refrain from fighting, the poisoning of the working class with chauvinism. It is too high a cost.

And just to say "No to the Capitalist EEC For a Socialist United States of Europe" is to evade the immediate issue, the concrete issue. There is no

space on the ballot paper that will allow a vote (!) for a United Socialist States of Europe.

We are for the United Socialist States of Europe. We will win that, whichever single country revolution occurs in first, in alliance with the workers of Europe. Chauvinism and its even more hideous twin, racialism, will hinder, not help, such necessary European and international working class unity; and the anti EEC campaign, from the furthest left to the fascist right, is nothing but chauvinism and little Englandism.

Don't Vote!

Therefore, we have said, and repeat: there is no real choice before us. The bosses keep their power, in or out. In or out, the fight goes on. Unity with the workers of the EEC should be our goal, not unity with Enoch Powell and the National Front.

The referendum is therefore a fraud and a sham. The cause of the working class and socialism is best served by an intransigent refusal to get drawn in. Now socialists must swim against the chauvinist tide. We say: Don't vote in the referendum! Unite with the workers of the EEC, not with Enoch Powell and the National Front.

AS TUC LEAVES JAILED PICKETS TO ROT

PREPARE NOW FOR MAY DAY STRIKE

AFTER 5 months of waiting, lobbying and pressuring, the TUC General Council finally made up its mind what to do about the two jailed pickets, Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson. The motion calling for a national stoppage to get them released was allowed to 'lie on the table'. The TUC decided to do ... precisely nothing.

The whole strategy, which overwhelmingly dominated the campaign up to now, of concentrating on pushing the national union leaders to act, has now come to a resounding full stop. Meanwhile, little has been done at rank and file level other than direct motions and mount pickets and lobbies to get the leaders off their backsides.

The two pickets are still inside, and conditions are worsening for them. Des Warren, who has doggedly refused to accept the status of a criminal, has not seen his family since before Christmas, and is in solitary confinement by order of Home Secretary Roy Jenkins. Both he and Ricky have been docked several weeks' remission for their 'indiscipline', but refuse to give up the struggle.

A call has now gone out, however, for a one day national strike on May Day. This call was made by the Liaison Committee for the Defence

of Trade Unions at its meeting on Saturday March 22nd.

This is a new departure for the LCDTU which, like the Communist Party which runs and controls it, has looked to the TUC to "defend trade unionism" in this case.

All trade unionists and socialists must organise now for this important one day strike. Immediately, get your workplace and union branch to pledge support and work to spread the word and get further pledges. Send delegations to nearby works and others in your combine or industry.

To make this stoppage meaningful, however, it is also necessary that this sort of rank and file organisation, geared to energetic action, be kept in being to carry on the fight after May 1st.

It is well past the time when decisive action should have been taken. The policy of trying to push the TUC to take up a 'progressive' position has been totally discredited. There can be no excuse for any further delay.

Make it an all out effort for May Day.
ALL OUT ON MAY DAY!

LPYS Conference

TIME FOR REALITIES, NOT BANALITIES

by PAUL ADAMS

This year's Easter conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists in Blackpool could repeat the banalities of last year. Or it could open out on at least some issues into a genuine debate. Whether or not we see debate will depend largely on the degree to which democracy is allowed to prevail at the Conference sessions. Certainly, there are sufficient amendments posing a sharp alternative to the dominant 'Militant' conceptions to provide the framework for a good debate.

The mass of resolutions and amendments still have about them the same stale, musty flavour of last year's motions — the flavour of the Militant grouping.

In almost every motion put forward by that group's supporters who dominate the LPYS there is a mixture of abstract propagandist passivity — the politics of the school teacher lecturing the working class rather than the revolutionary fighter participating in and leading actual live struggles; and a snotty English superiority, imposing the norms and forms of our Labour movement on that of other countries and cultures.

Naturally, one of the central sections of the agenda deals with "The Economy". Of 15 resolutions in this section 9 call in so many words for "the Labour Government [to] introduce enabling legislation to bring about the nationalisation, with minimum compensation based on proven need, of the 250 or so monopolies."

This method puts forward a blueprint, with no guide as to what form of struggle will be involved, and how the LPYS intends to participate in this struggle. Instead, typically, everything is a matter of calls on the Labour Government to do this or that. Basically Militant's approach denies any working class activity outside the Labour Party for political ends, thus reducing itself to another variant of the "peaceful road to socialism" approach of the reformist Communist Party. Amending this resolution, Eston LPYS poses, instead of faith in the Labour Party, the reality of the life and death struggle of a revolutionary situation: "The capitalist class will not leave the scene peacefully ... Socialism can be built only by smashing the capitalist state machine ... and replacing it with a state based on democratic Workers' Councils. ... In a revolutionary situation ... the mass of the membership of the LPYS and Labour Party will side with our class; but ... it is certain that the present leadership of the Labour Party will be found attempting to divert or repress the fight of the working class. Conference therefore resolves to fight to build up the combativity and self reliance of

rank and file workers, in opposition to the reformist policies of the leadership of our movement."

On wages, only Northampton South LPYS expresses "support for groups of workers, rank and file committees, shop stewards committees, councils of action etc" as well as suggesting an immediately relevant slogan to deal with inflation, a sliding scale of wages. All the other resolutions are bogged down in the prevailing muddle about the Labour Government. One resolution, for instance (No.62) refers to the "welcome cooperation" between the trade unions and the government — and then goes on to denounce the Social Contract (which is none other than the actual form which this "welcome cooperation" takes) as "only an attempt at a wage freeze under another name". And in the next sentence the policy of the Government which it recommends the trade unions to cooperate with are quite rightly labelled "Tory policies".

This confusion arises from the attitude of seeing the Labour Government as an unfortunately misguided workers' or revolutionary government which the LPYS can 'sort out' and put on the right track, rather than being clear on what it is — a second string to the capitalists' bow.

Such refusal to look at realities is nowhere so blatant as in the resolutions on Ireland. After the ignorant chauvinist hysteria that characterised last year's LPYS debate on Ireland, this is perhaps to be expected.



Militant loyalists — will they join a "non-sectarian trade union defence force"?

Even the best of the Militant inspired resolutions shows a blind faith as to the "opportunities for a class appeal to the working class Loyalists" and the possibility of a "heroic class unity of the Labour movement behind the sectarianism". Naturally, if such a "class appeal" is so easily effected, then it should not be difficult to erect the "Trade Union Defence Force" that is supposed to stop any sectarian bloodbath; and whose formation they make a condition for withdrawing British troops.

But in fact there is no immediate possibility for class unity, no reservoir of pristine trade unionists somehow untouched by the inter communal war of the north of Ireland, who might form this Force. No. The realities are quite different. Much bleaker and much uglier.

Be that as it may, British socialists must call for the unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, because they have no right to be there.

Militant supporters evidently see Ireland as a little England across the sea — a little England as amenable to neat recipes as their mythical little England is.

When it comes to South Africa we find the armchair socialists unable to stomach the reality of revolutionary violence. "Whilst recognising that the class must not shrink from the use of force when necessary" they say,



... and should these South Africans wait until the whites want to unite with them?

swallowing down hard. "this Conference deplores any use of terrorism outside the mass action of the working class as a give away to the capitalist state that enables it to clamp down harder." In South Africa, mind you! Not only that, but the action must be taken, resolution 81 has it, by the united black and white workers.

Wokingham LPYS, rightly, have sought to amend this to read "Conference recognises that the great majority of the doubly oppressed black workers cannot afford to wait until the privileged white workers are ready to unite with them. We fully support the black workers' struggle, including their armed struggle."

The key contest at this conference is not so much between this or that resolution or amendment, but between the sterile, nationally narrow, primitive and dogmatic conceptions of the Militant, and a more concrete, and active, approach to the class struggle.

Clay Cross — what would those Brussels bureaucrats have to say?

AFTER a dozen or so apologies and disclaimers, Housing Minister Anthony Crosland got round to moving the Housing Finance (Special Provisions) Bill on March 24th.

The main reason for this Bill being brought is the pressure that has built up within the ranks of the Labour Party to release the victims of the Housing Finance Act of 1972 from their fines and other penalties.

Conference after conference of the Labour Party has demanded that the government quash the penalties that were levied against the Clay Cross councillors because of their refusal to implement the Tories' notorious Housing Finance Act.

This Act — which the Tories ironically called the Fair Rents Act — demanded massive rent rises throughout the country. For many councillors, to implement this Act meant breaking the promises on which they had been elected; and it meant becoming the local accomplices of a Tory government determined to inflict huge cuts in working class living standards.

Of all the councils that made noises of defiance and the few that started on the road of active resistance, only the tiny Clay Cross council in Derbyshire stuck to its guns.

For this they were debarred from office by law; and the 11 councillors were surcharged a total of £7,000.

Other councillors stand to be surcharged — just for delaying the rent rises, they could be required to make up a total of £1½ million of uncollected rent.

Heroes

So the Clay Cross councillors, who led a long rent strike and kept up their out-and-out defiance to the end, are not only heroes to the labour movement; they are also a test case. No doubt if they had just been heroes, the Labour Government would have been happy to exact the full penalty, as it has with the Shrewsbury Two, with homilies about the sacredness and majesty of the Law. But to save themselves the full impact of the explosion that would follow if hundreds of Labour councillors, in every major town in the country, were landed with a surcharge bill, they have brought in the 'Special Provisions' Bill to modify the situation.

And, for all Crosland's humble apologetics — he assured the honourable Members that of those the Bill would help "most of them are not extreme militants" but merely "mistaken" in their defiance of Tory rackrenting — all the Bill does do is modify the surcharge situation, and limit the disqualification to two years.

One final twist: apparently, the penalty of disqualification from public office is in violation of Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations and also of the European Treaty of Human Rights, an ancillary treaty to the Treaty of Rome. Which, through membership of the EEC, makes it the Law of the Land.

So who's for Law 'n Order now?



Feisal: finally, at the other end of a gun...

AS 'world leaders' mourn the loss of one of imperialism's closest allies, socialists will view the passing of King Feisal in a different light. Certainly the masses of Saudi Arabia will.

Feisal was consistent in three things: repression at home, alliance with other reactionary regimes in the Arab world, and a firm commitment to US imperialism.

Feisal's prestige in the councils of western power politics has increased dramatically in proportion to the value of his country's oil wells, leading to something approaching adulation for this monarch of a vast and barely inhabited land mass for which he never did anything at all.

Feisal was reared in an atmosphere of extreme religious mysticism, repressive dictatorship and colonial subservience, starting his career as diplomatic visitor to the great British Imperial motherland. But by the end of the Second World War the Saudi royals ditched their allegiance to British imperialism in favour of the up and coming American variety, and one of the fledgling CIA's earliest successes was the expulsion of the British from the area.

Hand in hand with US imperialism, and adopting a religiously inspired anti communism as their mission, the Saud gang set themselves up as protectors and financial guarantors of reaction in the Arab world.

Almost every rearguard action against the new nationalist and at times progressive regimes of the area was financed and directed, in part, from Riyadh. The deposed Idris of Libya found refuge in Saudi Arabia, as did the deposed Egyptian monarchy. Royalist attacks against the emerging

Republic of South Yemen were launched from the same base. Similarly King Abdullah of Iraq took the path to Feisal's Mecca in the face of a nationalist uprising. And today Feisal's regime is supplying arms and finance for the suppression of yet another progressive movement, for the liberation of Oman. (His support at last year's Rabat summit for a motion recognising the PLO as the Palestinian people's representative was only apparently in contradiction to this: by this gesture of recognition of an established fact which he could no longer sabotage, he hoped to establish the relationship of patron to the Palestinians — a patron who would restrict and control this dangerous body.)

Like South Vietnam's Marshall Ky, Feisal was a fundamental ally of the Zionist state of Israel — and at the same time a European style anti semite, who took great delight in furnishing foreign journalists with the notorious Czarist police forgery, the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion".

In Feisal's Arabia all forms of political organisation are banned, as are trade unions. The one attempt to form a union among oil field workers, most of whom were Palestinians, resulted in instant imprisonment and expulsion from the country. Secular education is unknown, women are appallingly oppressed, and all means of communication are censored. The great wealth of the country has never been used to develop or modernise it: Feisal was far sighted enough to recognise that this would mean creating an indigenous proletariat — the force that can make a clean sweep of vile jailors and parasites like the Saudi Royal Family.

S.V.

NATO threat to Portugal's workers

SINCE THE events of 11th March in Portugal, the bosses and their press throughout the world have been deeply worried. The imperialists, who have spent billions of dollars and spilt oceans of blood to stop various dominoes falling in South East Asia or Latin America, are now confronted with a country on the very edge of the European capitalist heartland, slipping out of their grasp.

What has worried them most is not the rearrangements at government level — cabinet reshuffles, the replacement of the Junta and the Armed Forces Movement's Coordinating Commission by the Council of the Revolution; nor the arrest of leading capitalists; nor even the nationalisation of the ranks and insurance companies.

What has struck terror into them was the part played in the defeat of Spínola's coup by the working class and, above all, the rank and file soldiers themselves.

On March 11th, workers surged out of every factory and building site, putting up road blocks across all main routes and bridges and stopping all the traffic. Others went straight to their local army barracks and formed huge crowds outside to stop any soldiers moving to join the right wing forces, and haranguing the soldiers with appeals to side with the workers. They asked the soldiers for arms to 'defend the revolution', and at some barracks, they got them.

Asylum

Even at the most right wing barracks, that at Carmo of the National Republican Guard (where officers were holding the commanding officer appointed by the AFM in order to join the coup) "the people converged toward the building. In a short time, the square was filled with a crowd hurling insults at the guards. The latter dared not show themselves. They remained behind the heavy, tightly closed doors. ... at 4pm, two armoured cars left the building, carrying the leader of the mutineers, who was on his way to ask for asylum at the German embassy..." When those who remained, rank and file soldiers, appeared "fists raised, they saluted the link between 'the people and the armed forces'."

And at the First Artillery Regiment, the day was rounded off with a plenary meeting of the entire regiment, which passed a resolution calling for the execution of the right wing rebels and stating that they would never, ever, be used against the working class.

Internationale

March 11th set the seal on developments in the armed forces (especially the army and navy) during the past 11 months. In that time, the presence of large numbers of soldiers and sailors, in uniform, or workers' demonstrations has been a common sight. Where soldiers are detailed to control or stop a demonstration, units have instead greeted it with friendly smiles and waves, calling out support, shaking clenched fists and singing the Internationale. They have, too, arrived on the scene of a fracas between police and demonstrators, and turned their guns on the police.

In the navy, on some ships councils have been established. Like the workers committees in the factories, these embrace every member of the crew at all ranks, with everyone having an equal part in decision making. A measure of the revolutionary consciousness with which these have been formed is the fact that many have deliberately used the Russian name of SOVIET for their council.

What British workers should do

AT A Workers Fight public meeting in London on March 23rd, ALVARO MIRANDA of the Portuguese Workers Coordinating Committee appealed for support for the newly formed Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class.

This Campaign has been set up to organise support and solidarity with the struggle of Portuguese workers. In the case of Chile, the British working class only mobilised, slowly, after the event. If the labour movement gets mobilised now on Portugal, it can play an important part in helping to prevent the workers' movement there being drowned in blood.

British workers can and must act to stop Portugal becoming another Chile. Every militant should support this campaign, and get union branches, Trades Councils, shop stewards committees and other labour organisations to affiliate to the solidarity campaign. Invite a speaker from the Campaign to your branch, and send a request to your national organisation that a speaker be invited to address your Annual Delegate Conference. And pass resolutions supporting the Portuguese working class in its struggle for socialism, and demanding that the British Government oppose any imperialist intervention in Portugal.

Copies of resolutions should be sent to the Campaign, and they will be forwarded to the sister trade union in Portugal.

For more information, write to PWCC at 18 Fleet Road, London NW3.

by
Maxine Landis

The fact that the left leaning AFM controls the country politically and militarily doesn't mean that these moves towards democratisation of the army have taken place unopposed. The AFM leaders have certainly made no moves to change the Army structure, and although they could use the support the ranks against the more right wing sections of the AFM itself, they have never involved the ordinary soldiers and sailors in this struggle, but rather, relied on manoeuvres to keep control.

The middle class officers of the AFM may make general, abstract declarations of support for the working class at large, but when it comes to the working class conscripts, they still have the same feelings about them as any officer has about the ranks.

Democratisation

Thus the AFM, in relation to the armed forces themselves, remains elitist, recruiting only officers as members (there is a movement of sergeants who want to join the AFM, but have so far not succeeded) and still wedded to the old hierarchical concepts of how an army should be run; the changes they want to see in the army are merely that promotion should be on the basis of merit and ability, not class.

The movement for democratisation in the army ranks has been uneven. In some cases soldiers have been arrested for organising. Late in November eight soldiers at the Infantry Training Academy at Mafra were arrested



because the soldiers had been at a meeting to discuss the film Battleship Potemkin, (the famous Russian silent film — made in 1925 and never shown in Portugal before 25th April — about a sailors' mutiny in 1905). The discussion led them to analyse the film and relate it to their life in the barracks. The next day the discussion took place again, this time among all the soldiers at the barracks — and a list of demands was drawn up.

But the arrests have not led to courts martial, and generally result merely in a transfer to another unit. In other cases, disciplinary measures have been countermanded by the AFM.

Links

So far, there are few links between the different units, and links between soldiers and workers are formed on a sporadic and impermanent basis. But given the enthusiasm for fraternisation shown on March 11th and before, it should not be premature to think about fusing together this militancy in an organised form, with workers and soldiers coming together to plan political action and give each other solidarity in struggle.

The capitalist class runs its society, which is based on the constant robbery of workers, with very little recourse to violence. In general and at most times it relies on lies and fraud, on myths and miseducation, on inertia and diversion, on false, treacherous leaders and racist division, to keep itself safe. But behind the fraud, it always keeps the option of force — armies and police, jails and courts.

Yet it must recruit these armies and police forces from the working class itself, and the ability to use this force also relies on fraud, and is backed up by internal discipline.

If this fraud and this discipline should begin to break down, there is very little left to protect the bosses' system.

This is the situation they find themselves in in Portugal. But, just as the working class is an international class, so also the bosses can appeal for aid from their kind overseas, who recognise that a victory for workers in one country is a defeat for capitalists the world over. Their final 'fail safe' mechanism is to send in troops from elsewhere to intervene — troops still 'under the influence' of their fraud.

Shortly after the April 25th coup last year, a group of Portuguese officers were invited to London "to benefit from the experience of decolonisation that the British Army has".

NATO made other attempts to exert quiet influence. But now the situation has gone further, and cannot be retrieved by a friendly chat here and there. In February NATO held unscheduled manoeuvres off the coast of Portugal, which involved simulated air strikes on targets inside Portugal, and it was even proposed that US marines would disembark near Lisbon for "target practice" at a Portuguese army base.

NATO commanders are worried about their installations in Portugal — the HQ of NATO's Iberian naval command are near Lisbon; Germany has an air base in Southern Portugal; the US has an air base on Terceira in the Azores, which it used to airlift supplies to Israel during the last Middle East war; and France has a submarine base and missile tracking station. Also, the US uses Portugal to broadcast its propaganda station Radio Free Europe, and would be unable to find an alternative.

Intervene

But all these things are mere instruments, contingencies against the possible threat of the from capitalism's control of any European country. The loss of the bases and radio station count as nothing to the loss of Portugal itself.

There is little doubt that the NATO countries — including the British Labour Government — would seize the slightest chance they could to intervene, if they reckoned they could get away with it.

If they do, the Portuguese working class will face a much harder, better armed and better organised enemy than they did on March 11th. To win, they will have to be armed and trained in advance, to have close and firm links with soldiers committed to siding with them, and, above all, close and firm links with workers in other countries who will act to sabotage any intervention, plans their governments try to make.

MANIFESTO OF THE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN WITH THE PORTUGUESE WORKING CLASS

IN APRIL 1974 the army carried out a decisive move against the fascist regime, but recent events in Portugal have shown that only the continuous struggle of the Portuguese working class provides a solid foundation for the eventual overthrow of all reactionary forces.

Since last year's coup, Portuguese workers have won better wages and better working conditions, and have asserted their power through rapidly expanding trade unions and mass organisations. But meanwhile, the international crisis and the loss of a privileged position towards the African colonies, together with the clear acts of economic sabotage by big business, are hitting hard Portugal's weak economy. Faced with rampant inflation and mass unemployment, the Portuguese labour movement came out again on to the offensive and through factory occupations, land seizures and streets demonstrations is trying to defend its gains and to strengthen its organisations.

The ruling class reacted quickly. Like in Chile, it is resorting to all means to restore its exclusive power and crush the workers' movement. This is the meaning of the coup on March 11th, which was supported by international capitalism and its agencies, such as the CIA and NATO.

Here, the British press has launched a hysterical campaign, which distorts the events and totally misinterprets the situation. The obvious aim is to prepare public opinion for a right wing manoeuvre and, if necessary, foreign intervention.

Repression

Two years ago the Portuguese Workers Coordinating Committee undertook to inform the British labour movement of the extent of the repression of the Portuguese working class and of their long and bitter struggle against fascism. Messages of solidarity and concrete actions of protest against Portugal's reactionary rulers and their supporters — the Tory government — were the immediate response of the trade union movement. Now another powerful expression of class solidarity and strength is urgently needed.

At the moment, the British working class, in common with the working class of all capitalist countries, is under attack. The economic crisis in the whole of Western Europe and the United States is affecting the standard of living of workers everywhere. In countries like West Germany, where the rate of inflation (8%) is considered moderate by present day standards, unemployment is soaring. Where unemployment is still being contained, inflation is running at 20% and over.

The pressure on the working classes of the various countries is greater where the system is crumbling fastest. Britain is now one of the poorest countries in the Common Market, with a rate of inflation second only to Italy. It is therefore feeling the effects of the crisis most. British big business, fearing its consequences, is campaigning to stay in the Common Market in order to reinforce their alliance with big business in other countries. They hope thus to better attack British workers and make them pay for the crisis.

It is not by accident that the British mass media are simultaneously supporting right wing coups in Portugal, campaigning for the Common Market, and attacking the British Labour movement, accusing it of greediness and excessive wage demands, calling for statutory wage controls. If thought necessary, British troops, now being used to break the Glasgow dustmen's strike, will tomorrow be sent to Portugal to crush the Portuguese working class. When the system is in crisis, wherever it may be, the workers must pay.

Shrewsbury 2

For the British working class the signs of the crisis are not new, and the battle for survival began some time ago. The Tories attempted to introduce the Industrial Relations Act because they already knew the crisis was coming and new weapons were needed to beat the workers. When the dockers stood up to the Industrial Relations Act, despite the screams of the media for 'law and order', British workers understood that the dockers were fighting a battle on behalf of all the working class and rose in their support. When the Tories in their second offensive attempted to institute statutory wage controls, the whole of the British labour movement came to the support of the miners, and the bosses were again defeated. The vital battle for the right to picket and the release of brothers Des Warren and Eric Tomlinson is still raging.

Portuguese workers are now bearing the brunt of the attack carried out by the united capitalist class of all western countries. Through their agencies, within and outside Portugal, whether they be ex-General Spínola, the National Republican Guard, NATO, CIA, Interpol, the CBI or the City, they are determined to smash the Portuguese working class by whatever means necessary.

If they succeed and a Chile type coup takes place, ending in the massacre of Portuguese workers, it is the whole of the European labour movement that will be defeated. Then the bosses will gain strength and it will not just be Industrial Relations Acts, imprisoned pickets and social contracts that British workers will have to face. It will be Industrial Relations Acts and statutory wage controls, anti picketing laws and anti immigration legislation, backed up by the whole might of the state's repressive apparatus.

It is our duty to stop the intervention of NATO and foreign troops in Portugal. It is our duty to stop any economic boycott of Portugal, whether by the multinationals or by the finance institutions. Without the support of the British and European working classes, Portuguese workers cannot succeed.

UNITED WE SHALL WIN!
DIVIDED WE SHALL FALL!
We call on the whole labour movement to support the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese working class.

SMITH AND THE RISE OF ZIMBABWE

2nd part of an article by BAS HARDY

EVER SINCE he made his "Voice of Reason" speech in which he predicted that "unthinkable consequences" would follow in Africa if the Rhodesia settlement were not reached, South Africa's Prime Minister Vorster has toured many African capitals in order to establish "friendly relations" with the black states. For their part, the Organisation of African Unity have gone as far as suggesting that, privately, they admit South Africa as a member state.

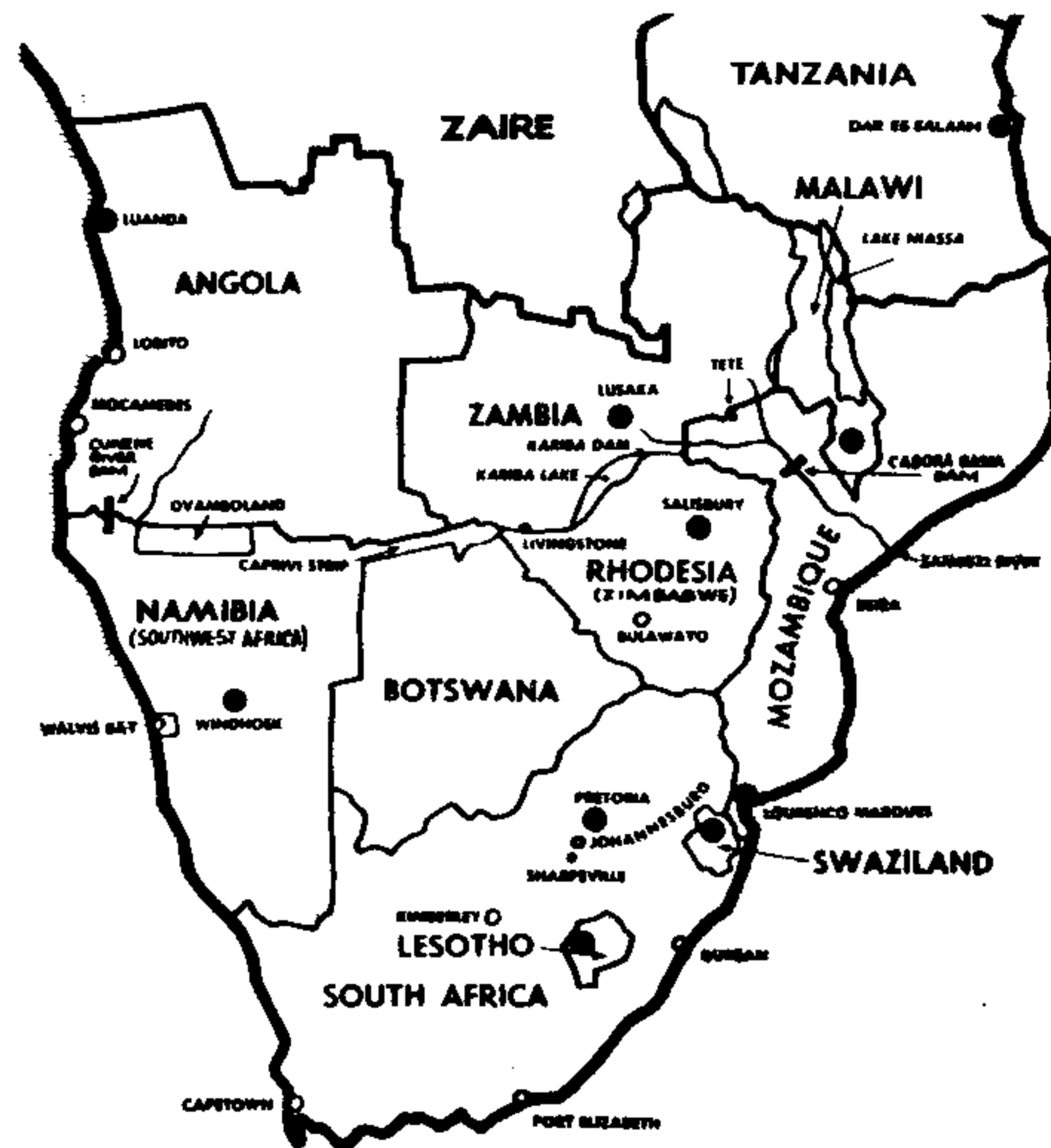
South African politicians talk of "fantastic" opportunities for investment in black Africa as a detente is established. And representatives of the African middle class in the rest of the continent know that they will get some of the spoils. In the Zambian economy, for instance, the major industry is copper. It is owned by Road, a subsidiary of AngloAmerican, one of the main mining firms in South Africa. The fact that the Zambian government has joint ownership with this firm in the mining trust indicates a clear compatibility of interests between the Zambian rulers and South African capitalism.

Collusion

Another reason for collusion with Vorster is a desire to defuse a potentially explosive situation in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa itself, which could not only challenge capitalism there but in the whole of Africa — and indeed have wider implications than that. Kaunda, Nyerere of Tanzania and Vorster want diplomatic settlement before military confrontation between the Smith regime and the Zimbabwe guerrillas escalates.

To achieve this objective, Kaunda has agreed to neutralise the Zimbabwe opposition, in exchange for Vorster undertaking to make Smith more pliable to ideas of settlement even if that meant majority rule in the near future in Rhodesia. In a recent interview Kaunda admitted as much — almost in so many words. Of Vorster, he said: "...anything we say at the moment may endanger or complicate his own position and quite honestly we do not like to do that at all. We want to say only in general terms that we know Mr. Vorster is playing some important role in so far as the minority regimes are concerned... One only hopes that he will be able to use his influence in his own circles to try and make changes before it is too late."

It has been clear since the moves towards talks over Rhodesia began before Christmas, that Kaunda was putting pressure on the Zimbabwe



liberation movements. In the interview he states that "Again, I must say very seriously that unless our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe hold on to this unity, they cannot expect real help from the rest of Africa."

The "unity" to which Kaunda refers is that which was made last December when the three Zimbabwe liberation organisations (Zanu, Zapu and Frolizi) united with the African National Congress of Zimbabwe and under its umbrella. This move is almost a replica of the Angolan one, with the same motivation — OAU control over the liberation organisations.

The old ANC leadership itself represents the interests of the urban African middle class of Zimbabwe, and has had a long record of attempting to accommodate itself with the white settler minority in Rhodesia in terms of political and social position — at the expense of the masses. With the end of the Welensky and Todd 'liberal' racist policies in the early sixties, this has been denied them and they have since reluctantly attempted to involve the masses in their fight for 'responsible' African government.

A recent statement by ANC leader

Bishop Abel Muzorewa shows that the ANC's bourgeois outlook hasn't altered much. "We believe", he said "that the rights and property of the minority should be protected; we do not, however, believe in the minority's amassing of social, political and economic privileges at the expense of the freedom of the majority". What sort of freedom can he envisage for the majority if it does not include removing the property held by the white minority at the expense of the majority. This property means that the whites, who are just one in 22 of the population, have a monopoly over half of Rhodesia's farmland, the best agricultural land in the country. How can they continue to own their property and not have "privileges at the expense of the freedom of the majority"?

The neocolonial orientation of the ANC is matched by that of one of the liberation parties, Frolizi. Formed for the same reason as the Angola group UNITA, Frolizi has had less success, because unlike Angola, Rhodesia has a large black bourgeois political party. In arguing against the Rhodesian request to hold negotiations in Salisbury, Frolizi leader James Chikerema felt this "would be tantamount to a recognition of Smith, and we insist on British chairmanship because Zimbabwe is a colony of Britain. As such it must be decolonised in the same manner in which other British colonies were"...

Release

It was clear from the start, and long before the arrest of Zanu leader Ndabaningi Sithole, that Ian Smith was going into the settlement negotiations in a spirit of complete intransigence and only under the considerable pressure of South Africa. Before the talks were to start, two of Smith's representatives made an eight point undertaking to OAU leaders. They promised 1)the immediate release of all detainees and people in 'protected villages'; 2)the release of all political prisoners as soon as possible; 3)the rescinding of death sentences for political prisoners; 4)the cessation of political trials; 5)a general amnesty to those outside the country considered to have committed political crimes; 6)revocation of the ban on ZAPU and ZANU; 7)the creation of conditions conducive to free political activity and expression.

But Smith never fulfilled these undertakings. Only 100 out of 350 detainees were released, mainly because they were needed for the negotiation preliminaries. And when three national liberation fighters were executed in late February it was clear that Smith was intent on putting insurmountable barriers in the way of Vorster and black bourgeois leaders.

Plotting

Finally Smith resorted to the arrest of Dr. Sithole, announcing that he would be charged with offences relating to his general work as leader of Zanu — and, by implication, that all the African side in the negotiations and in particular the Zanu representatives, were "criminals".

The further charge that Sithole had been plotting the deaths of other leaders in the nationalist movement was the crudest possible attempt to turn the nationalist movements viciously against each other.

Vorster found it necessary to put further pressure on Smith, summoning him again to Capetown and, meanwhile, withdrawing the forces he'd lent Smith to their barracks.

Yet the OAU leaders had leant over backwards to appease Smith, persuading some Zimbabwe nationalists to accept the "seven plus one" deal as a basis for a settlement. This envisages a common electoral roll for black and white, with all those over 21 and with seven years primary and one year's secondary education being eligible to vote. Given the severe oppression of the Africans (who, though living on starvation wages, must pay for secondary education which is free to the rich whites) this would mean only a tiny proportion of the African population getting the vote — some 90,000 out of 5.8 million.

But even this small proportion would give Africans about the same number of votes as whites, and the plan anticipates majority rule after the life of one parliament (5 years) when, it assumes, there will be 300,000 black and 190,000 white electors; independence would then be granted.

A few white Rhodesians have also been pushing this line. Sir Roy Welensky argued recently that Rhodesians should amend the constitution "so that the common roll is restored and aim to get roughly equal numbers of voters, black and white, on it ready for a general election. Secondly, we should aim to see that by the next election after that one, the majority of voters would be black. ... I advocate change over a period of seven to eight years... Unless we get it one can see the very real possibility of the whole of our continent in flames."

The Afrikaaner press of South Africa



Zimbabwe guerrillas — problems for Smith



Sithole with supporters

is also pushing for Smith to agree to eventual majority rule, explaining that it is an "inevitable development of the internal logic of Rhodesia's constitution".

But Smith has an 'internal logic' of his own. As a political representative of the white settler caste, he realises that majority rule, no matter how safe, would mean the demise of the social power of the settlers. It would lead to the drastic reduction of white land ownership and the end of the super privileged position of the European labour aristocracy. The white settlers owe their stake in the country not to the natural workings of the capitalist economy, but to the possession of their own state power. Once that state disappears, there will be no reason for the settlers to stay. And if Smith looks like "giving in to the blacks" then his party, the Rhodesia Front, which enjoys the unanimous support of the white settlers, will depose him.

Not only is Smith fearful of agreeing to the five or seven year plan. Zapu and Zanu, although they have allowed themselves to be dragged into the ANC, have refused, as yet, to accept anything short of majority rule as the immediate prerequisite for a negotiated settlement. This was the reason why the negotiations last December "foundered", according to Vorster, providing Smith with an easy excuse for resorting to a hard line position.

Zapu and Zanu are liberation organisations founded in the early 1960s. They are both committed to nationalism and vaguely talk of 'socialism'. There are no clear ideological differences between them, but both have separate followings among the two major Zimbabwe tribes, the Matabele and the Shona. Zanu split from Zapu in 1963 on the grounds that it followed a strategy of diplomacy too much rather than concentrating on building a base in Zimbabwe itself.

Both have guerilla forces operating on a small scale in Zimbabwe's north eastern region, and these forces (believed to be to the left of the leadership) have been able to give the Smith regime a good deal of trouble and stretch his security forces. Large numbers of these forces are black, and their discipline is uncertain in the face of an 'enemy' they would prefer to support.

Due to the repression, it is difficult to gauge the following of Zanu or Zapu in the towns, although it would seem that the Zimbabwe working class tend to concentrate primarily on trade union demands rather than nationalist ones. This indicates a failing on the part of

Zanu and Zapu to link the guerilla struggle to that of the urban working class, which constitutes 35% of Zimbabwe's African population. The chance to organise openly was probably among the most attractive of the conditions on which they agreed to participate in talks.

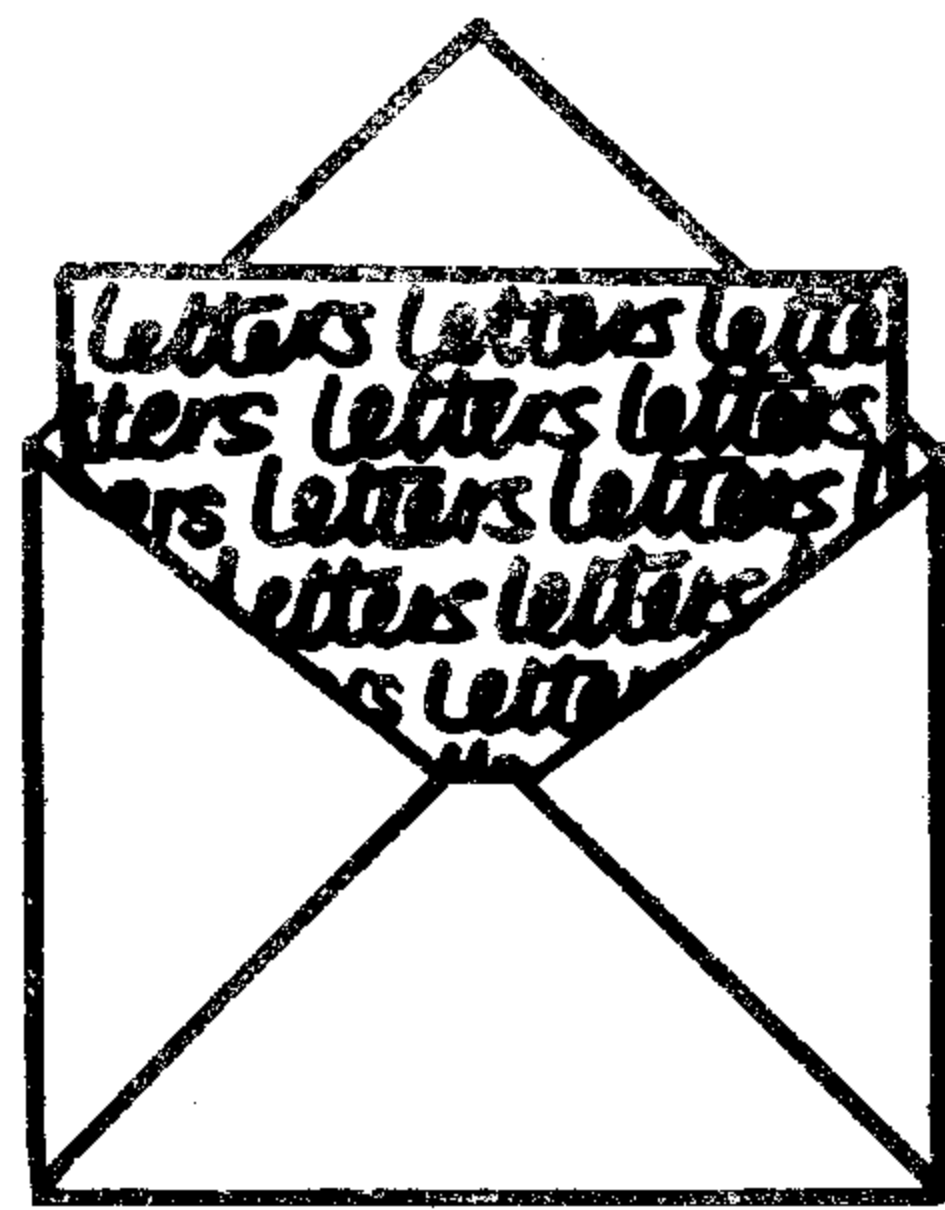
But they were also pressured into the talks by leaders of African bourgeois states, on whom unfortunately they rely to quite an extent to continue the guerilla struggle. Kaunda's regime, which borders Rhodesia to the north, has in the past forced Zapu guerillas across the border into traps prepared for them by the Rhodesian army on the other side. Kaunda has also banned organisations in Zambia which support the liberation struggle. And now his regime is preventing the guerillas from operating across the border.

The guerillas themselves have no clear idea what the leadership's plans are in relation to negotiations and a pre talks ceasefire. This led to disorientation within the fighting forces last November when the Smith regime attempted to use the ceasefire to disarm the guerillas.

Despite these setbacks, it has mainly been due to the efforts of the guerillas (and those who brought about the end of Portuguese colonialism in neighbouring Angola and Mozambique) that Smith is being pressured to make any concessions at all. And their presence is still vital. The breakdown in negotiations for talks caused by Smith provides no guarantee that the OAU and ANC bloc will cease making further concessions. But, given Smith's complete unwillingness to budge, the prospect of resumption of armed struggle — with at least Zanu unable to stomach any more concessions with one leader, Sithole, jailed and Herbert Chitepo, their military commander, murdered — is the likeliest immediate development.

The breakdown of talks should be welcomed by those who support the national liberation struggle in Africa. Yet the general record of the African nationalist leaders provides little optimism about the outcome, given the absence of a socialist tradition in Africa and the prevalence and weight of neocolonial regimes.

Too concerned with socialist purity...



Dear Comrades, The length of the reply to my original letter criticising your front page attack on Tony Benn and the other attack on the Engineering Broad Left, testified to the importance of the issues raised. Unfortunately Jack Price, like the mythical Don Quixote, tilts at windmills most of the time. He sees differences between us that don't exist but obscures the very real differences that do.

My letter makes perfectly clear that the real movement is in mass struggle. Without it, neither Benn nor Foot, nor even the Labour Government, would exist and the Tories would still be there. Jack Price does not understand the importance of winning real advances, even under capitalism, including the return of Labour governments with progressives in the cabinet. For him it's socialism or nothing. To advocate any other tactic is to be a revisionist (or a right winger with a leftist mask). We are thus left with the only true revolutionaries, the Workers' Fight. It is this sort of nonsense, fully exposed in Lenin's *Left Wing Communism, an infantile disorder*, that disarms the working class movement in a particularly dangerous fashion, spreading illusions that nothing can be achieved under capitalism and that even socialism cannot be achieved in this or any other country until the future "world revolution".

The process of imbuing the movement with a socialist ideology is not a question of maintaining the socialist purity of our approach and bashing every left winger who doesn't measure up to our preconceived idea of a revolutionary. It is one of building up the strength of working class and trade union organisation to maintain and win essential concessions, which create first, class and then, political consciousness, and give confidence to go further and weaken the hold of capital.

NO - JUST CONCERNED WITH SOCIALISM!

Jack Price replies:

Let's stick to one thing at a time! Last time Bill Ward wrote, it was to say that it was "just infantile prattle" to say that Benn's Industry Bill was "decisively a right wing one", and that "the presence of Tony Benn in the Cabinet is a concession won by the left..."

In reply we tried to make an objective assessment of where Benn stood. We said: "We would say that the most vital, the most important part of the working class movement is to be found with those workers striking against the social contract, those workers against occupying redundancies, those workers fighting for some control over their daily work life and complete independence from the management. Benn, however much you call him "left", however much "better" you think he is than the Labour right wing, is in favour of keeping down wages under the social contract, is approving redundancies, and is in favour of schemes which even Bill Ward recognises involve loss of working class independence. Like it or not, in relation to the most militant struggles of the working class, Benn is found on the wrong side of the class divide.

That is why we condemn and attack Benn - because he stands with the capitalist class on decisive issues."

Now does Bill Ward agree with this or not? We do not want to "see differences between us that don't exist" but then we don't want to "obscure the very real differences that do".

If Bill Ward agrees with us - and as he does not say a word against what we have said on this score we assume he does - then all his erudite references to Lenin's *Left Wing Communism, an infantile disorder* boils down to it saying that Benn is to the left of the Labour Party and better than many in the Labour Party.

This is not, however, the issue as far as we are concerned. For us "building and strengthening the movement" means looking at the leaders of that movement, the ones capturing the imagination, perhaps, of the most militant sections of the working class, and seeing what they do in the light of the needs and possibilities of the working class. Our class should, after all, elect its own leaders in this way.

Why is the Tory Press launching an attack after attack on Benn? This is a class attack to try and shift Benn and win the abandonment of the Industry Bill even in its present weak form, compelling a further lurch to the right by the Labour government and making easier the return of the Tories, obviously a blow to the movement and to socialism.

The problem of nationalisation, the form it should take the role of factory occupations against redundancy, worker cooperatives (like Meriden) and their tactical role, worker and trade union participation in joint boards, are some of the vitally important questions that require fundamental discussion in the working class press. But this type of fruitful discussion, urgently needed, will not be helped by irresponsible and subjective attacks on lefts and progressives. What they 'are' (their sincerity etc.) is not important but what they represent is. The building and strengthening of the movement is the first priority (the real movement) for fundamental change in a socialist direction, making it far less likely that it will succumb to right wing pressure, as well as throwing up other left leaders.

On the Broad Left in engineering issue, I note that your analysis consisted in a vague charge of bureaucracy and that a trade union candidate standing on a revolutionary (!) platform is to be preferred to one standing for a broader set of demands. Neither of these positions seem to owe anything to Marxism but as the candidate in question is now in the Labour Party (as I am informed) and enjoyed the support of the Broad Left in the last ballot - and as that ballot is now over - we'll leave it at that. And thanks for the (belated) advice to engineering workers. Fraternally, Bill Ward, Bolton

If we start painting them up because the Tories are attacking them or because there are "worse" people around, then we will fail in our task of strengthening the movement and doubly fail ever to raise it above the level of dependence on such "leaders".

The "process of imbuing the movement with a socialist ideology" demands that we judge the Benns and Foots of the movement against the programme that accords with that socialist ideology. Lenin in *Left Wing Communism* did not revise this fundamental of his teaching; what he stressed is that we must be prepared to merge organisationally sometimes with the broadest masses. Organisationally, not ideologically.

On the question of the Broad Left: the fact that "the candidate in question is in the Labour Party" is not the point. His record indicates that he is a revolutionary. The fact that the Broad Left is supporting him in this ballot is also besides the point: what else could they do after Len Brindie's poor showing if they still wanted to keep the right wing out?

Southall battle over racist Labour Club

THE RECENT decision by the management committee of Southall (west London) Labour Club to ban admission to black people has provoked deep anger in the large immigrant community there. There exists the basis in Southall for a powerful campaign to defeat this move, which is in fact only a formalisation of a long standing colour bar at the club.

The rule is purely racist and the club doesn't even try to pretend otherwise. Last year the local Communist Party branch secretary Dick Dixon tried to challenge the system by taking some Indian guests into the club with him - and he was promptly beaten up.

Lots of small businessmen in the area have taken trade union membership in the T&GWU simply in order to be able to drink in a whites only club! And since the House of Lords ruling on the Preston Dockers Club, which permitted the exclusion of a West Indian on the grounds that the clubs have a 'right to privacy', Southall is not even infringing the Race Relations Act.

Labour Club boycotted

Ealing Trades Council has mounted a campaign of boycott against the club, and is fighting for the blacking of all deliveries to the club and for trade unionists to refuse to attend meetings held there. The Ealing Community Relations Council has called on Southall Trades Council to do the same, and appealed to Labour Party branches and local councils to publicly dissociate from the club. What the councillors and members of Southall Labour Party who belong to the club and attend meetings there will do is not yet clear. However, the local branch of the T&G has decided to support the boycott. (And it is to be hoped also that they take up the question of the businessmen who are getting into the club as members of the Union.)

In such a campaign, the recently formed Southall Campaign Against Racism (SCAR) has a particularly important job to do. SCAR held a conference on Friday March 21st in Southall, at which the question of the Labour Club came up, but the delegates were divided as to what action to take. Some were in favour of a campaign of boycott, others were for joining the club to fight for a reversal of the decision. In the end, all they decided on was a "campaign", the nature of which would be discussed further.

1971 Act

This failure to concentrate on definite perspectives for action characterised much of the conference. The SCAR aims at being an active united front of working class and immigrant groups organised to fight against racism and the National Front in the trade unions and labour movement, against racial discrimination in education, employment and civil rights, for the removal of racist legislation and in defence of workers threatened by racist attacks. The conference was supported by several Labour Party wards, trades councils and immigrant organisations, and also the Communist Party and revolutionary groups. About 200 attended.

V.D.Sharma opened the conference with a talk on immigration controls, pointing out the dictatorial power given to the police by the 1971 Immigration Act - search and arrest without warrant, no obligation to specify charges against 'aliens', etc - and explained how the holder of a work permit was always at the mercy of the Home Office and the employer, having only the right to stay one year at a specific job for a specific employer. The aim was to create a cheap and

discipline workforce on a purely racist basis, to undermine working class organisations generally.

Reysham Sandhu concentrated on the danger of fascist infiltration of trade unions. He pointed out that simple defence of jobs and wages could not defeat the NF - it was necessary to fight for the expulsion of fascists from all trade unions. He spoke of the hostility of the union bureaucracy to black workers and stressed the right to form separate caucuses inside trade unions, because of the indifference of the white labour movement.

Much of the discussion centred around this question of denying a platform or a place to fascists. Communist Party speakers were against it, claiming that the struggle against fascism was not a question of "administrative measures" but "an ideological struggle", largely aimed at misguided workers.

Against this, several speakers pointed out the systematic efforts of the National Front to work inside the trade unions, and that this work was directed towards destroying those organisations. To campaign for expulsion was the only way an ideological struggle could realistically be carried on against fascism. It made no sense to allow people who were members of such organisations as the National Front into trade unions.

Too much of the discussion, though, was general, without being directed towards specific goals such as what to do about the Labour Club, what to do about the busing issue (an important question in Southall) and how to organise specific campaigns. It is to be hoped that the SCAR plays a leading role in the fight for the boycott and blacking of Southall Labour Club, and does not confuse the issue with arguments about Labour Clubs as "working class organisations" which are therefore not to be boycotted.

L'pool Trades Council approves "GET OUT" unity with Tories

MEMBERS OF Liverpool Trades Council who were furious at their president, Barrie Williams, being involved with racist Tory Phillip Rankin in the Get Britain Out Campaign (see WF90), tried to reverse Williams' policy at the Trades Council's AGM last week.

Phil Holt, and other supporters of the Militant, condemned Williams' action and argued that the best way of opposing the EEC was by fighting for a United Socialist States of Europe. (How we would get that by voting NO, they didn't say.) They said Rankin had a record of being an arch reactionary and racist of the worst kind, and in this respect indistinguishable from the National Front. Williams was reminded that at its last meeting, the Trades Council had decided to have nothing to do with racists and fascists in the anti EEC campaign.

They got their answer from a string of Communist Party members and supporters who ranted on about unity and the need to defend "British democracy". When the CP was reminded that it had once taken this unity to the point of going on the same anti EEC march as the National Front, they brushed that aside, and responded by asserting that Phil Holt was an erstwhile supporter of the EEC - as if that were on the same level of political treachery as marching with the NF!

When someone had the temerity to point out to these Little England 'socialists' that socialism can't be built in one country, the CP's Tony McLelland launched into an eulogy of the 'socialist democracies' of Eastern Europe. Socialist democracy, he said, doesn't just mean votes. Maybe he meant to say that it doesn't even mean votes...

This whole squalid argument over whose method of 'fighting the EEC' was the best should have gone one step further toward convincing revolutionaries that the whole sorry business is of no concern to the working class.

Finally, the Trades Council voted to stay in the committee with Rankin - but if he 'admits to being a fascist' they will 'take steps' to get rid of him. Maybe the Trades Council hasn't noticed that even the National Front claim they are not fascists. And Rankin is a Tory.

The priorities of both the CP and the Militant, despite their wrangling, were exposed later in the meeting when they voted together against a proposal to send a delegate to the Troops Out Movement's conference on "The Labour Movement and Ireland", without even bothering to say why. The capitulation of these 'Marxists' to British chauvinism apparently knows no bounds.

Pete Cresswell

Organised by the Troops Out Movement and sponsored by National Labour Movement Delegate Conference on

The British Labour Movement and Ireland

Thursday 24th May
Collegiate Theatre,
Gordon St., London WC1

starts: 10.00am
ends: 5.30pm approx

With: Wilson MP (Secretary South East), Jeff Roper MP (Birmingham), Perry Bar, Morrison Colquhoun MP (Northampton North), Sidney Dooland MP (Gilling, Southwell), Joan Maynard MP (Sheffield Brightside), Frank Maguire MP (Fermanagh, South Tyrone), Dennis Connon MP (Stirlingshire) LP of Council (GLC Alderman), David Thornley TB (Lab. Ball Epsom)

Delegation fee: 75p per delegate
Contribs from: TQM TB Hornsworth Rd, London W.1.

Textile workers on 'buy British' binge

Last Tuesday three thousand textile workers from all over the north of England took part in what must have been the most bizarre demonstration the labour movement in this country has seen for a very long time.

Asian workers marched alongside fellow demonstrators who chanted "Buy British" slogans and carried banners demanding an end to the import of Asian goods. Union banners inscribed with the usual slogan "Unity Is Strength" waves above the heads of mill girls who urged passers by to protect British workers by not buying foreign rubbish. Tumultuous applause greeted a speaker at the rally who announced proudly "when my wife goes shopping she always buys British and we should do the same if we want to save our jobs".

Cyril Smith, Liberal MP for Rochdale, was cheered loudly when he

congratulated textile union leaders for the sacrifices they had made in the past to save their industry, sacrifices which have cost mill workers tens of thousands of jobs and kept them among the lowest paid workers.

This charade went on as part of a campaign by textile union leaders backed by the bosses and an all party committee of MPs to have import controls on goods and raw materials from the Middle and Near East, Asia, and Portugal. In a situation where mills are closing, 2,000 jobs have been lost over the past few months in Lancashire alone, where 50,000 are on short time, the best response the leaders of traditionally backward and passive mill unions can muster is a dead end campaign to defend their bosses against foreign competition.

A resolution for the Executive Committee of the textile workers' union

was passed overwhelmingly. It demanded import cuts, "continuous liaison... between MPs, trade unions, and employers", and joint action by textile and clothing unions and opposition to mill closures "by all means available". The last two points can only be taken as token gestures, a pretence that the union leaders are aware of the class struggle.

Nowhere in any of the major speeches was there a hint of understanding that the bosses are the ones responsible. No one pointed out the absurdity of the fact that Lord Kearton, Courtaulds' chairman and the man who supervised the chopping of 17,000 jobs between 1970 and 1973 in the UK, was paying the wages of his employees who had taken time off work to go to London, those who

weren't laid off anyway, that is.

From one part of Central Hall however, loud dissenting cries were heard. The people responsible, who were howled down and threatened with expulsion from the meeting, were shop stewards from the Courtaulds new mill in Skelmersdale.

Bob Morrow, one of the stewards, said afterwards, "Rank and file apathy is the problem. Most of these people have been in the industry too long. They started out earning a fiver, then it went up to £10, and they thought they were doing fine, £12 and they were delighted, they could buy a house. When it goes up to £17 they're over the moon". B. Carroll, a member of the overlookers' union, said "We wouldn't have voted for that resolution, it was a waste of time. It doesn't say anything about fighting the boss. Textile workers need to get the feel of their strength. We tried to tell them. We aren't on short time. We aren't being thrown out of our jobs, and the reason is that Courtaulds couldn't do it because we would occupy the place if they tried."

Workers at Skelmersdale are new to textiles. They were recruited at the end of the '60s, mainly from areas where militancy was pretty high. They are now attempting to set up a Courtaulds wide shop stewards' committee.

Only one speaker attempted to point out the employers' responsibility for the industry's crisis. Mike Blair, textile workers' union delegate to Todmorden Trades Council, was cut off by the chair as he tried to argue the case for nationalisation of Courtaulds and Carrington Virella. Talking to Workers Fight during the demonstration, he said: "Banning imports won't do anything for textile workers. The leadership have collaborated all the way with the bosses so that in the end they can just play Pontius Pilate and just wash their hands of the whole affair. If the Labour leaders were sincere about saving jobs they'd nationalise. This unemployment has to be blamed on the textile barons and their puppets in the unions."

Change of face for Teachers Rank and File

The Spring Term Rank and File teachers' National Committee took place last Saturday in Coventry.

There was some optimism over the question of victimisations, with a report that after a lobby of Phoenix School the previous week the charges against the five teachers who took unofficial action against the Houghton Report had been dropped. A lobby of Garret Green school, where teachers also face victimisation, is planned for Monday April 21st.

The hearing against the Liverpool 12 has been postponed as the original complaint was drafted in a way contrary to NUT rules. Nonetheless, it is important to remain vigilant: latest details, and copies of the Merseyside Teachers Action Committee free booklet on the April salaries claim, can be obtained from 6c Fulshaw Close, Netherley, Liverpool 27.

On the April salaries claim, Dick North pointed out that in the event of the claim not being ratified at the Easter Annual conference of the NUT, we must be in a position to take up the fight again next term. It was also decided that Rank and File should issue a statement at the Conference condemning the recent article in the NUT newspaper, "The Teacher", by Max Morris (expresident of the NUT and a CP member) where he accused Rank and File of attempting to undermine the union.

Further it was agreed to support the National Rank and File Papers Conference on equal pay, which is scheduled for April 26th. Local Rank and File convenors should write to Roger Cox at 214 Roundwood Road, London NW10, for details.

The most heated debate was over an IS sponsored proposal to change the masthead of 'Rank and File' from "paper for socialist teachers" to "paper for classroom teachers", and change the orientation accordingly. While not denying the need to try to reach out to teachers who do not yet see their problems from a socialist viewpoint, Workers Fight supporters at the NC put an amendment insisting that Rank and File must develop discussion round a socialist approach to education as well as talking about "bread and butter" issues. The amendment was defeated by 47 votes to 21.

Nurses' unions militant — for lousy claim

The trade union side of the Whitley council, at its meeting with NHS management today (25.3.75) is demanding a £30 minimum for all trainee staff, which is 15% increase including threshold payments, and a similar increase for auxiliaries, SENs, Staff Nurses and Sisters.

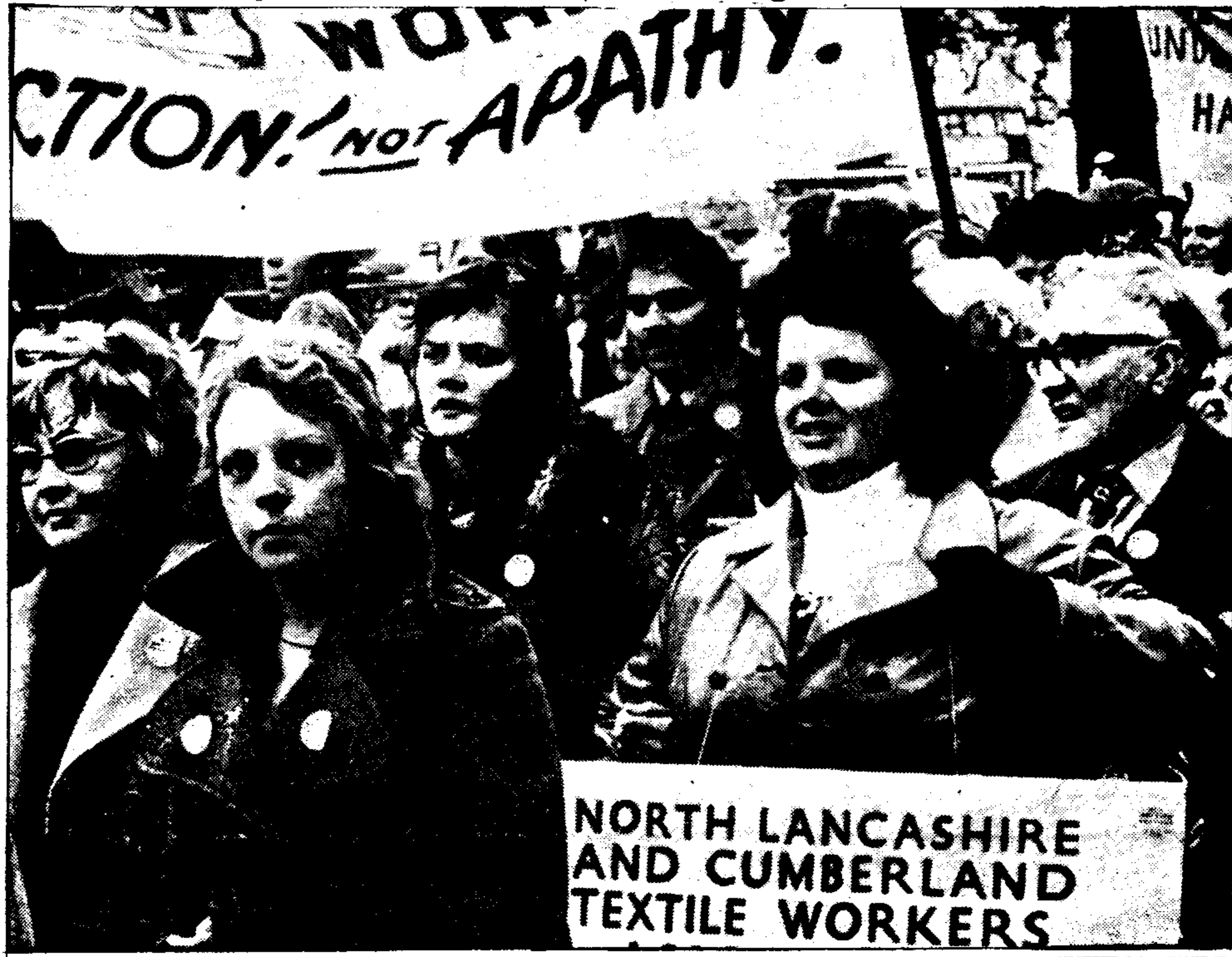
The unions are "sticking out" for this claim against a management offer which gives £1530 per year to first year student nurses, £30 below the union minimum claim.

The real problem is that the union claim is nowhere near realistic. The first year student nurse gets £4.10 a week increase on top of threshold payments which we should be getting anyway. Take off tax, superannuation, insurance, etc. and the union claim comes out to about £2.50 increase.

At the same time the lodging charges are going up under a "new formula" which will include all the "accessories", heating, lighting, furnishings, etc.

The union claim includes a reduction in the working week from 40 to 38 hours, but no offer has been made towards that. A realistic policy must be based on pushing for the 38 hour week, and demanding a sliding scale of wages with 50p or 60p increase for every 1% increase in the cost of living. The unions should stop pussyfooting about like the 'professional' bodies of the type of the Royal College of Nursing, and start fighting. Len Collingwood (student nurse, COHSE)

WORKERS FIGHT is taking a break over Easter. It will resume regular publication on April 19th. Have a good holiday!



Talking shop conferences won't win women's struggles

IT WAS hardly surprising that the WOMEN AND SOCIALISM conference held in London over the last weekend (March 22nd, 23rd) failed to achieve anything other than planning another conference. The organisation of the weekend and the attitudes toward it were yet another example of the amorphous nature of the Women's Movement in Britain.

Right from the beginning there was confusion and dissension about what should be the structure and consequently the aims of the conference. Although the conference was entitled How to build a mass movement, many women were hostile to the fact that a plenary session had been organised around the papers submitted by left wing groups.

The debate sprang from the fact that people saw the conference as providing different functions. Many women saw it as a place to discuss the ideas of women's liberation and gay liberation; how it affected them and the different campaigns going on. To do this, they felt it necessary to have a completely unstructured conference based on workshops in which they could best express themselves.

Others felt that as it was specifically a meeting of socialist women they should make a thorough analysis of the present economic crisis and what it meant for working class women in terms of redundancies, cuts in social expenditure, and so on. And to do this, it was vital to have a structured conference in which socialist women could really begin to get to grips with formulating some kind of programme of action.

The split was therefore not only on how the discussion should be run, but also on what should be discussed.

It became clear which view prevailed. Specific proposals for a structured conference met a very hostile reception from nearly all the women, many of whom considered that they resembled the types of organisation adopted by "male dominated left wing groups". They considered the present loose set up of the WLM to be the most democratic and the least inhibiting. In reality, however, the "let everyone have her say" in the "free atmosphere of an

unplanned workshop" approach ends up being exactly the opposite of democratic, allowing people organised into distinct tendencies, who had prepared well in advance, to dominate, inhibiting rather than stimulating the individual women.

For most of the closing session utter confusion reigned, with some women being booed, hissed and jeered at. So much for democracy!

Given this total disorganisation, it is very difficult to assess the actual proposals put forward in answer to the question posed by the subject of the conference.

These proposals ranged from using the women's groups and Working Women's Charter as propaganda tools to 'expose the reformist nature of the Labour Party and TUC action on women' (put forward by the IMG, who didn't say how the predominantly confused and largely reformist women's groups were to do this); to the idea of setting up coordinated 'Socialist Women's groups to fight on redundancies, social welfare cuts, abortion and so on; to the plan advocated by an American influenced group who wanted the movement to concentrate all its energies on an Abortion campaign, in the hope that the implications of such a one issue campaign would lead, somehow, to a general radicalisation of the mass of women involved.

None of these schemas seemed to take account of the fact that there already is a women's campaign with the potential of combining militant practical action with propaganda, and which links up women's domestic and sexual oppression with their super exploitation and low status at work. This, the Working Women's Charter Campaign, was what Workers Fight concentrated on in its approach to the conference. There is still so much work to be done on the Charter, in terms of amendment of demands and also hammering out a nationally coordinated framework with a democratic structure, bulletin, etc. that the project mongering and fruitless wrangles of the Women and Socialism conference can only be seen as a wasteful diversion of time and energy.

Mary Corbishley
Pat Longman

from page one TROOPS OUT OF GLASGOW!

will use the situation for their own ends."

The exclusion of the Communist Party from this tirade is all that distinguishes it from the red baiting of Woodrow Wyatt or Aims of Industry. And indeed, the Communist Party in Glasgow is opposed to any independent mobilisation of solidarity. The secretary of Glasgow Trades Council, Communist Party member Reidford, has played a pernicious role in bureaucratically manipulating Trades Council meetings and demonstrations, and following this up with bitter and twisted anti-red hysteria, that led him to identify to the Glasgow police known militants and revolutionaries on the march on Friday 21st, in an effort to get rid of them and their slogans demanding Troops out of Glasgow.

Practical solidarity has, despite all these obstacles, flowed from all parts of Scotland. Support on the picket lines outside the main incinerators has come from Rolls Royce workers at Hillington, from Yarrow workers, and with Corporation electricians (themselves in dispute over pay) joining forces too. The dustcart drivers' strike has now been spread beyond Glasgow to Gourock, Port Glasgow, Greenock and Dundee.

The armoured last ditch defence of the Social Contract has left Labour's left MPs speechless. Tribune is silent — its hero Michael Foot is the very Minister responsible for the troops being in Glasgow. There are plenty of speeches about the danger of the EEC to the working class and our living standards; but precious few words about the use of troops to defend a wage cutting fraud.

Solidarity is the key. Will we see another mass flying picket like at Salties Coke Depot? If you can't get to the picket, send money and messages to the strikers at the "Trade Union Centre, Carlton Place, Glasgow". And if you are in the G&MWU, T&GWU or EPTU, let your union leaders hear a barrage of demands for the strike to be made official.

The use of troops to break a strike, any strike, should produce an immediate reaction of confrontation and escalation. If the trade union movement fails to respond to this challenge, it is giving this and any other government a free hand to use troops when it likes, and to use the threat of them even more often, without fear of provoking an explosion of anger and militancy.

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